

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-23 and 25-101 are currently pending, with Claims 25-101 being withdrawn as being directed to non-elected inventions. Claim 23 has been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 1-4, 14, 17, and 19-23 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 3 was objected to as containing an informality; Claims 19-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter; Claims 1, 2, 4, 14, 17, 19 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being unclear regarding various limitations; Claims 1-12 and 14-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,215,437 to Shima (hereinafter “the ‘437 patent”) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0054339 to Arakawa (hereinafter “the ‘339 application”); and Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘437 patent in view of the ‘339 application, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,542,892 to Cantwell (hereinafter “the ‘892 patent”).

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection to Claim 3 is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 3. Claim 3 has been amended as suggested in the outstanding Office Action.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 19-23 are rendered moot by the present amendment to those claims. Claim 19 has been amended to be directed to a computer-readable medium storing a computer program that, when executed by a computer,

causes the computer to share a print environment thereof with a second computer.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 19 is rendered moot.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, are rendered moot by the present amendment to Claims 1, 2, 4, 14, 17, 19, and 22. In particular, regarding Claim 4, Applicants note that Claim 4 states that the connection data related to the second sharing unit added to the service data are managed as one of upper level data, same level data, and lower level data, which indicates a hierarchical relationship between the first sharing unit and the second sharing unit within the network. The changes to Claim 4 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter. Applicants refer the Examiner to Figures 4 and 5A-5C and the discussion related thereto in the specification. As shown in Figure 5A, for example, the specification discloses a service list that includes information on an upper level, same level, and lower level relationship between various sharing units.

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a server apparatus, comprising: a first sharing unit that shares a print environment thereof with other apparatuses on a network, wherein the first sharing unit includes (1) a connection management unit that manages the connecting of the first sharing unit to a second sharing unit of a second server apparatus on the network, the network including at least one print server and at least one printer in addition to the second server apparatus; and (2) a transfer unit that transfers at least one of information of a print reservation and a document related to the print reservation to the second sharing unit of the second server apparatus. The changes to Claim 1 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Office Action asserts that the '437 patent discloses everything in Claim 1 with the exception of a transfer

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Figures 1 and 18 and the discussion related thereto in the specification.

unit that “transfers at least [of] one reservation information and a document related to a print reservation to the second sharing unit,”<sup>2</sup> and relies on the ‘339 application to remedy that deficiency.

The ‘437 patent is directed to a printing method in a server computer acts as a relay between client computers and printers that are connected to each other via a network. In particular, as shown in Figure 1, the ‘437 patent discloses that the server computer establishes sessions in response to secure communication session establishment requests from a client computer and a printer, and connects the two sessions so that the client computer sends a print job to the printer via the server computer and causes the printer to perform a printing operation.

However, as admitted in the outstanding Office Action, the ‘437 patent fails to disclose a transfer unit that transfers at least one of information of a print reservation and a document related to the print reservation to the second sharing unit of the second server apparatus, as recited in amended Claim 1.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the ‘437 patent fails to disclose a connection management unit that manages the connection of the first sharing unit to a second sharing unit of a second server apparatus on the network, the network including at least one print server and at least one printer in addition to the second server apparatus, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, the ‘437 patent merely discloses a server computer for interfacing and relaying information between a client computer and a network printer. The ‘437 patent does not teach or suggest the transfer of print reservations and documents between first and second sharing units that are provided in first and second servers on a network, as recited in amended Claim 1.

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<sup>2</sup> See page 5 of the outstanding Office Action.

The '339 application is directed to a method for controlling an image processing apparatus having a storing portion for storing print data requested by an information processing apparatus, including the steps of inputting designation information for arranging plural image originals read by a scanner device at different positions, and a step for processing the print data and the read plural image originals based on information inputted in the inputting step. In particular, as shown in Figure 1, the '339 application discloses an image server 200 connected to a network and also connected to a digital color copier 1000. Further, as shown in Figure 2, the '339 application discloses a color scanner 100 connected to the image server 200. In addition, as shown in Figure 10, the '339 application discloses that a print driver may be used to designate a "server spool type," in which case the print job is temporarily reserved on the image server 200 until a printing instruction is inputted from the operation panel of the image processing apparatus, at which time the print job is read out and a print processing is effected by the image processing apparatus.<sup>3</sup> Further, the '339 application discloses that the scanner controller 101 in the scanner can send a determined job list request command to the main controller of the image server 200 so that the main controller of the image server retrieves a job management table to find the job ID, document name, and total page number.<sup>4</sup>

However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '339 application fails to remedy the deficiencies of the '437 patent, as discussed above. In particular, Applicants respectfully submit that the '339 application fails to disclose a server apparatus that includes a first sharing unit that includes a connection management unit that manages the connecting of the first sharing unit to a second sharing unit of a second server apparatus on the network, wherein the network includes at least one print server and at least one printer in addition to the second server apparatus. The '339 application does not teach or suggest the multiple

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<sup>3</sup> See paragraph [0093] in the '339 application.

<sup>4</sup> See '339 application, paragraph [0138].

servers recited in Claim 1, as well as the transferring of reservation and document information from the first server to the second server, as required by Claim 1. Rather, similar to the '437 patent, the '339 application discloses a client computer, a server, and a printer.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of the '437 patent and the '339 application are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest a connection management unit that manages the connecting of the first sharing unit to a second sharing unit of a second server apparatus on the network, the network including at least one print server and at least one printer in addition to the second server apparatus, as well as a transfer unit that transfers at least one of information of a print reservation and a document related to the print reservation to the second sharing unit of the second server apparatus, as recited in Claim 1. As discussed above, the combined teachings of the '437 patent and the '339 application do not teach or suggest the multiple servers recited in Claim 1, as well as the transfer of print reservation information between the servers. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 is rendered moot by the present amendment to that claim.

Independent Claims 14 and 19 recite limitations analogous to limitations recited in Claim 1. Moreover, Claims 14 and 19 have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 14 and 19 are rendered moot by the present amendments to those claims.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), Applicants respectfully submit that the '892 patent fails to remedy the deficiencies of the '437 patent and the '339 application, as discussed above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 13 is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1.

Applicants note that Claim 2 states the connection management unit adds connection data related to the second sharing unit to service data indicating other sharing units in the

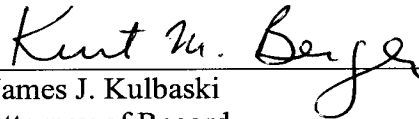
network that are connected to the first sharing unit, in response to a connection request from the second sharing unit. In this regard, Applicants note that the Office Action relies on the '437 patent to disclose this additional limitation. In particular, Applicants note that the Office Action refers to column 6, lines 46-59 in the '437 patent. However, Applicants note that that passage in the '437 patent merely relates to the printer management table shown in Figure 4, which includes a list of printers, along with their IP address, port name, and organizational name. Figure 4 in the '437 patent discloses printers that have logged into the server. However, Claim 2 requires connection data related to a second sharing unit to be added to service data indicating other sharing units in a network that are connected to the first sharing unit. In this regard, Applicants note that the sharing units recited in Claim 2 are part of respective servers on a network, and are not printers. Accordingly, for this additional reason, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 2 patentably defines over any proper combination of the cited references.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 14, and 19 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the '437 patent, the '339 application, and the '892 patent.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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